

might be prepared to offer an amendment, which would obviate his objections.

The question was then taken and the amendment of Mr. CHAMBERS was agreed to.

Mr. SELLMAN enquired whether the amendment would be open to amendment in Convention?

The reply from several quarters was in the affirmative.

REGISTRY LAW.

Mr. JENIFER said, he was gratified to find that we had gotten through with the first section. That difficulty having been surmounted as far as the Committee was concerned, he would now move the amendment which he indicated some days ago.

"That the Legislature may provide for a uniform registration of voters within the State of Maryland, which shall be taken and held as the only evidence of the qualifications of said voters, to vote at any election that may hereafter be held in the State."

Mr. J. said, it was admitted by all that under the present system frauds were committed upon the right of suffrage, and the purity of the ballot box annually invaded. It was also admitted that a remedy should be applied, but it was objected that none heretofore proposed would be adequate to correct the evil—hence, all have been rejected. A registry law, with proper provisions, seemed to him to be the best measure to accomplish the object.

The distinguished gentleman from Cecil, (Mr. McLANE,) suggests additional penal laws. The gentleman from the city of Baltimore, (Mr. PRESSTMAN,) thinks that the committees of vigilance at the polls, the most effectual preventive. The gentleman from Caroline, (Mr. STEWART,) says, give to every voter a homestead, and other gentlemen have given their views, but no definite proposition made, which has not been rejected. If then, this Convention, seeing the evils of the violation of the elective franchise, the innumerable frauds committed at every election, cannot provide the remedy, let us, at least, place it in the power of the Legislature, to make such regulations as may be adequate. The registry law of 1837-8, which was repealed in 1839, is referred to, as evidence against it. It should be recollected that that law was confined to the city of Baltimore. It was partial and invidious; many believed it to be unconstitutional, as he (Mr. J.) did. It imposed duties upon the electors of the city of Baltimore, which were not common to others of the State. The law itself was inadequate.

By adopting the amendment now proposed, it will enable the Legislature to pass a Registry Law with such provisions as may guard the ballot box from fraud and place all the voters of the State upon the same footing. The question of unconstitutionality will not arise, the experience of the past will be beneficial to the future—no honest man entitled to a vote, will be deprived of the inestimable privilege, whilst it will protect the elective franchise in its whole purity.

Gentlemen are quite indignant at the proposi-

tion to make five days residence in an election district necessary to entitle the elector to vote—and seem to think that any guards thrown around the ballot box to protect it from fraud, is a restriction upon the rights of the elector. It is stigmatized by some as oppressive, a grievous infringement of the elective franchise. How is it that five days residence in an election district in the city of Baltimore is a denial of the right of suffrage, and the requirement of six months residence in the counties should be a just and necessary restriction? Should the proposition now under consideration be adopted, it will apply to the whole State and there is nothing invidious in it. Reject it and according to the construction given to the clause in the Constitution by the gentleman from Baltimore, and others, a single night's sleep in any district will entitle the elector to vote in that district, whether for delegates to the Legislature, members of Congress, or at other elections. Mark the difference as applied to the counties. No elector can vote for a Governor or member of Congress until he shall have a *bona fide* residence of six months in the county in which he proposes to vote. He may be eligible as Governor or Representative in Congress, and elected as such, but cannot vote himself, unless he has resided six months in the county. Whereas in the city of Baltimore the elector can cross over into any election district, and by one night's residence vote in all cases of elections. Is there not a singular inconsistency in the action of gentlemen in regard to the elective franchise? No member of this body, no honorable man in the State would deprive the honestly entitled elector of his vote—no honorable man should encourage the vote of one not entitled. In either case it would be unjust and an infringement upon the rights of those entitled to suffrage. But if all the evils attendant upon illegal and fraudulent voting, cannot be arrested, does it follow that we shall not make such wholesome regulations as may prevent a portion of them.

Mr. RICAUD offered an amendment to which—

Mr. PRESSTMAN suggested a modification by the insertion of the word "unfair," &c.

Mr. RICAUD accepted the suggestion, and the amendment was read as follows:

Insert after the word "Maryland," the following:

"And from time to time thereafter, of all who may become such qualified electors;" and add at the end of the said amendment, the words following: "or some other uniform provision whereby the legal and qualified electors may be fully and truly ascertained, and the elective franchise protected from all fraud."

Mr. JENIFER accepted the first branch of Mr. RICAUD's amendment as a modification of his own.

Mr. KILGOUR said, he desired to move an amendment to the amendment of Mr. JENIFER—by striking out in the first line the word "may," and inserting in lieu thereof, "shall not." Mr. K. also desired, he said, to make a speech, but thought he could make it better on Monday than to-day. Some opportunity should also be allowed